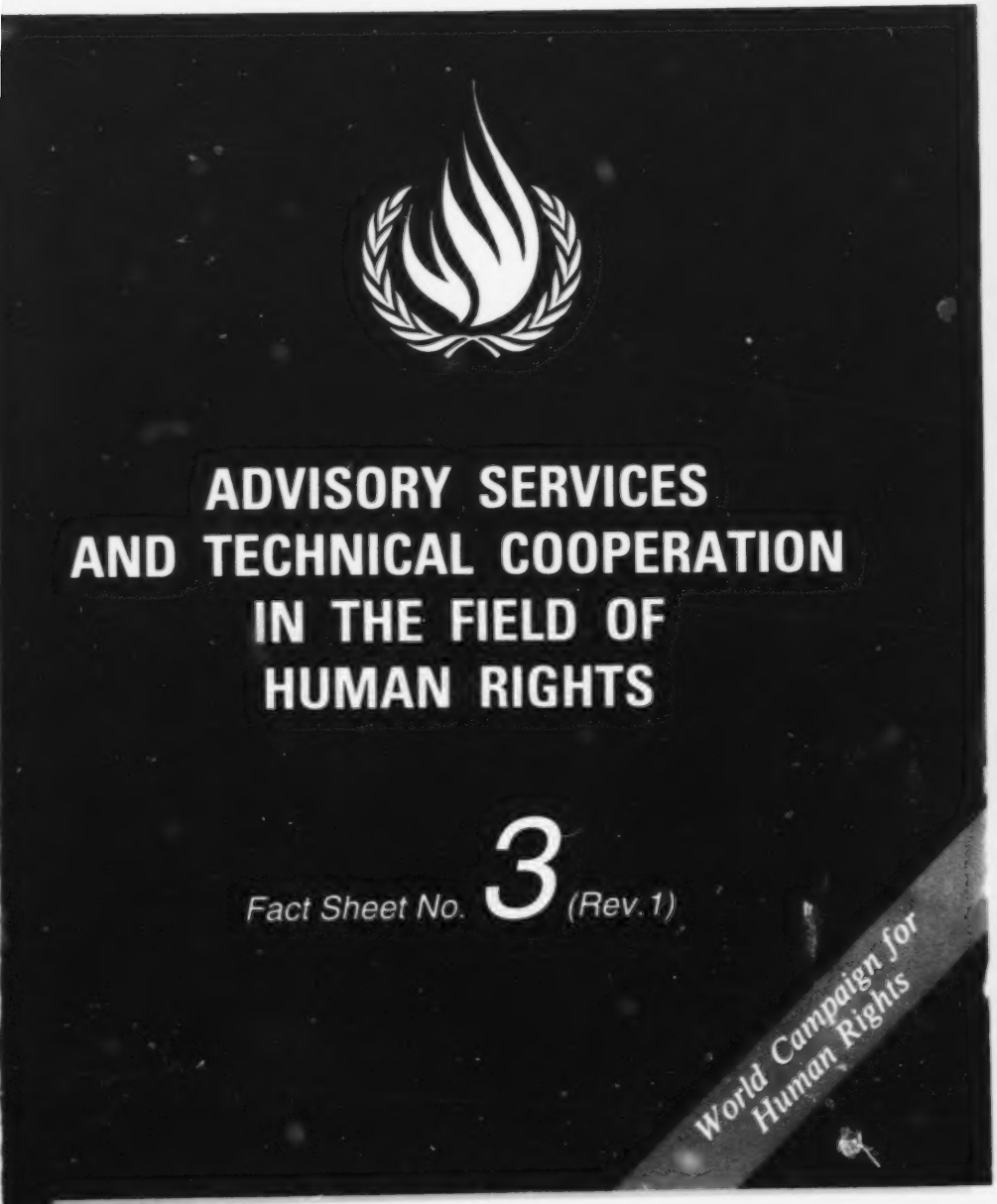
Human Rights



ADVISORY SERVICES AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Fact Sheet No. 3 *(Rev.1)*

World Campaign for Human Rights

Whereas *it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law . . .*

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS*

(third preambular paragraph)

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* Adopted by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948.

Introduction

The importance of ensuring that human rights are protected under the rule of law has been emphasized by the United Nations since the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and has guided the Organization in its activities for the promotion and protection of human rights ever since. This is most evident in the work of the United Nations Programme of Advisory Services and Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.[1] This programme, as described below, has been engaged since 1955 in assisting States, at their request, in the building and strengthening of national structures which have a direct impact on the overall observance of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law.

A decade after the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations, and after some early ad hoc human rights assistance activities, the General Assembly officially established the United Nations Programme of Advisory Services in the Field of Human Rights (resolution 926 (X) of 14 December 1955). Thereby, the General Assembly specifically authorized the Secretary-General to make provision, at the request of Governments, for assistance in the field of human rights, including advisory services of experts, fellowships and scholarships, and seminars. Subsequently, the General Assembly increased the services available under the programme to include regional and national human rights training courses. On the basis of these resolutions, activities under the programme have been carried out in numerous countries in each of the world's regions for some 40 years.

The programme was further strengthened when the Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights (subsequently renamed Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights) was established by the Secretary-General in November 1987 pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1987/38 of 10 March 1987 and Economic and Social Council decision 1987/147 of 29 May 1987. The objective of

[1] The programme is commonly referred to as the United Nations Programme of Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (hereinafter, "the Technical Cooperation Programme").

the trust fund is to provide additional financial support for practical activities focused on the implementation of international conventions and other international instruments on human rights promulgated by the United Nations, its specialized agencies or regional organizations.

In accordance with relevant Commission on Human Rights resolutions, practical activities to be financed by the Voluntary Fund include:

(*a*) support for international cooperation aimed at establishing and strengthening national and regional institutions and infrastructures which will have a long-term impact on improved implementation of international conventions and other international instruments on human rights promulgated by the United Nations, its specialized agencies or regional organizations;

(*b*) expert and technical assistance to Governments with a view to creating and developing the necessary infrastructures to meet international human rights standards;

(*c*) projects and programmes that can play a catalytic role in the practical realization of internationally recognized human rights standards;

(*d*) projects for legal protection and strengthening of the independence of the judiciary;

(*e*) comprehensive needs assessments and overall country programmes, including specific projects aimed at strengthening the human rights infrastructure of a country.

The technical assistance programme financed under the Voluntary Fund is therefore a comprehensive programme providing practical assistance for the building of national and regional human rights infrastructures. Programme components focus on the incorporation of international human rights standards into national laws and policies, and on the establishment or strengthening of national institutions capable of promoting and protecting human rights and democracy under the rule of law. Such assistance now takes the form of expert advisory services, training courses, workshops and seminars, fellowships, grants, the provision of information and documentation, and the assessment of domestic human rights needs.

For its part, the World Conference on Human Rights, throughout the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which it adopted in June 1993, recognized the importance of advisory services and technical assistance for human rights and called for enhancement of the programme.

With regard to technical cooperation, for example, the Declaration and Programme of Action call for the implementation of plans of action at the national level for the promotion and protection of human rights through the establishment of a comprehensive United Nations programme (part II, paras. 68-69). The Technical Cooperation Programme, according to the Declaration, should be strengthened. The Declaration further states that the Centre for Human Rights should make available to States, upon request, technical and financial assistance, in particular for the elaboration and implementation of coherent and comprehensive plans of action. These plans of action would integrate activities aimed at: (*a*) strengthening the institutions of human rights and democracy; (*b*) reforming penal and correctional establishments; (*c*) the legal protection of human rights; (*d*) education and training of officials, lawyers, judges, security forces and others in human rights; (*e*) broad-based education and public information for promoting respect for human rights; (*f*) other means of promoting the good functioning of the rule of law.

Funding and administration of the Technical Cooperation Programme

The Programme of Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights is funded from the regular budget of the United Nations and from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, which began operating in 1988 and to date has received more than US$19 million in pledges and contributions. In addition to financing from the regular budget and the Voluntary Fund, specific projects are sometimes funded by partners of the Centre for Human Rights in the United Nations system.

Whatever the source of funding, projects are implemented within the common context of a single, unified and comprehensive programme, administered by the Centre for Human Rights. While, consistent with resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, a distinction is maintained between projects financed under the regular budget and those financed by the Voluntary Fund for purposes of accountability, reporting and budgetary information, the common substance and policy of the programme remain.

Programme development, implementation, support and follow-up are carried out by the Technical Cooperation Branch of the Centre for Human Rights, under the direction of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights holds overall responsibility for the programme, under the authority of the Secretary-General. The High Commissioner is mandated, under General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, to provide, through the Centre for Human Rights, advisory services and technical assistance at the request of States and, where appropriate, regional human rights organizations, with a view to supporting actions and programmes in the field of human rights. He is also responsible, *inter alia*, for coordinating human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system.

In a further important development, the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1993/87 of 10 March 1993 (para. 18), requested the Secretary-General to appoint a board of trustees to assume the administration of the Voluntary Fund. The board of trustees was established in December 1993.

The programme approach

Technical cooperation activities are seen by the United Nations as a complement to, but never a substitute for, the monitoring and investigating activities of the human rights programme. As emphasized in various reports of the Secretary-General on the subject, and in Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/53 of 3 March 1995 (preamble), the provision of advisory services and technical assistance does not reduce a Government's responsibility to account for the human rights situation and, whenever applicable, would not exempt it from monitoring through the various procedures established by the United Nations. Indeed, action by special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights often takes place in parallel with projects of advisory services and technical assistance.

While the Technical Cooperation Programme occasionally provides grants in support of projects initiated by non-governmental organizations, Governments and regional human rights organizations, it is not, in the first instance, a funding source for projects developed outside the Centre for Human Rights. Rather, it is a source of substantive advice and assistance in the field of human rights, within the

framework of a comprehensive programme which cooperates with Governments, at their request, through Centre-generated needs assessments and projects designed in cooperation with recipient countries.

The Centre for Human Rights, in most cases, responds to a Government's request by conducting a careful assessment of the country's particular human rights assistance needs. Assistance programmes are then designed to address those needs in a comprehensive and coordinated way. The Centre directly implements all projects for which it has unique or specific competence, drawing on the considerable expertise developed by its staff in the relevant areas, and serves as a focal point and coordinator for other programme elements relating to the human rights needs of the country concerned. This comprehensive approach was first described in the 1993 report of the Secretary-General on advisory services in the field of human rights, and was further elaborated in his 1994 report.

Content of the programme

Guided by successive General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights resolutions, and by the nature of State requests themselves, the Technical Cooperation Programme gradually developed capacities for assistance in a range of areas, which now provide a useful framework for national efforts directed at strengthening human rights and the rule of law. Thus the Centre for Human Rights now adopts a comprehensive approach to human rights institution building, which sees as fundamental the following constituent elements for national efforts to secure the protection of human rights under the rule of law:

(*a*) a strong Constitution, which, as the highest law of the land, *inter alia*:

(i) incorporates internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, as enumerated in the International Bill of Human Rights;[2]

[2] Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols. (The international human rights instruments cited in this Fact Sheet are, unless otherwise indicated, reproduced in *Human Rights: A Compilation of International Instruments*, vol. I (2 parts), *Universal Instruments* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XIV.1).)

(ii) establishes effective and justiciable remedies at law for violations of those rights;

(iii) empowers an independent judiciary, consistent with the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary;

(iv) provides for non-discrimination on the basis of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, and which protects national minorities;

(v) establishes national human rights institutions, such as an office of the ombudsman or an independent human rights commission, consistent with the United Nations Principles relating to the status of national institutions;[3]

(vi) provides for the applicability of international human rights treaty obligations in domestic law;

(vii) defines and limits the powers of government and its various branches, *vis-à-vis* each other and the people;

(*b*) a strong electoral system, which, *inter alia*:

(i) assures that the will of the people is the basis of the authority of government;

(ii) assures the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives;

(iii) assures equal access to public service, including elective public service;

(iv) provides for periodic and genuine elections;

(v) guarantees universal and equal suffrage;

(vi) guarantees the secrecy of the ballot;

(vii) secures an electoral atmosphere which is free of intimidation and respectful of certain prerequisite rights, such as freedom of opinion, expression, information, assembly and association;

[3] General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993, annex.

(viii) provides for non-discrimination in the area of political rights;

(ix) provides for independent review of alleged irregularities;

(x) provides for objective, unbiased and independent electoral administration;

(xi) provides for the transfer of power to victorious parties and candidates under the law;

(*c*) a strong legal framework, under the Constitution, which protects human rights and democracy and provides for effective redress in all key areas, including, *inter alia*:

(i) fair immigration, nationality and asylum laws which are consistent with relevant international standards;

(ii) penal laws and laws of criminal procedure which respect and uphold international standards for human rights in the administration of justice;

(iii) electoral laws which take account of the above concerns;

(iv) prison laws and regulations which are consistent with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and other relevant international instruments;

(v) laws for the protection of minorities, women, children, indigenous people and other vulnerable groups, which take into account their special status and international standards for their protection, and which outlaw and address the effects of discrimination;

(vi) laws protecting free association and assembly;

(vii) security legislation which is consistent with international standards, and which protects non-derogable human rights;

(viii) laws on the judiciary, on legal practice and on prosecution which reflect the standards embodied in the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, the Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors and other United Nations standards on the administration of justice;

(ix) laws, guidelines and directives which govern the conduct of police and other security forces, consistent with the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and other relevant international standards;

(x) fair procedures for the settlement of civil disputes under the law, and fair administrative laws, procedures and institutions, consistent with international human rights standards;

(xi) any other laws which may have a direct impact on the realization of internationally guaranteed human rights;

(*d*) strong national human rights institutions, including independent commissions on human rights and ombudsman offices, with structures and functions consistent with the United Nations Principles relating to the status of national institutions, as well as strong national human rights research and training institutes;

(*e*) a strong judiciary, which is independent, adequately empowered, adequately financed, adequately equipped, and adequately trained to uphold human rights in the administration of justice;

(*f*) a military which has ultimate allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the land, and to the democratic Government, and which is trained in and committed to the principles of human rights and humanitarian law attending legitimate military duties;

(*g*) effective and accessible mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts between and among citizens and groups in society and State organs;

(*h*) full incorporation into the international human rights system, including through ratification of or accession to international human rights treaties and training of government officials in implementing and reporting under those treaties;

(*i*) a society which is educated in its rights and responsibilities, including through national human rights curricula in primary, secondary and post-secondary education, and teachers trained in education for human rights and democracy;

(*j*) a strong civil society, including adequately trained, equipped, financed and organized non-governmental human rights organizations, women's groups, labour unions and community organizations.

Taken together, these essential elements provide for a legal and institutional framework which will best serve to entrench the rule of law in society and thereby secure the effective enjoyment of human rights and democracy. In recognition of this, the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Centre for Human Rights, in partnership with other United Nations organs, Governments and non-governmental organizations, offers support to States seeking to strengthen these elements. As already indicated, such support takes the form of comprehensive country programmes and targeted projects, in the form of advisory services of experts, training courses, workshops and seminars, information and documentation projects, fellowships and some forms of financial assistance, in the substantive areas described below.

A. National plans of action

In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which it adopted in June 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights recommended that the Centre for Human Rights, through its advisory services and technical assistance activities, assist States in the preparation of plans of action at the national level. In accordance with that recommendation, the Technical Cooperation Programme can make available expert assistance in the elaboration of such plans, and in their implementation.

B. Constitutional assistance

Under this programme component, the Centre for Human Rights provides assistance for the inclusion of human rights norms in national constitutions, and can play a facilitative role in encouraging national consensus on the elements to be incorporated in those constitutions. Assistance for these purposes may take the form of advisory services of experts, the organization of conferences, provision of human rights information and documentation, or support for public information campaigns to ensure the involvement of all sectors of society.

Issues addressed in the Centre's constitutional activities include legislative drafting and constitutional law; the drafting of bills of rights; the provision of justiciable remedies under the law; options for the allocation and separation of governmental powers; the indepen-

dence of the judiciary; and the role of the judiciary in overseeing the police and prison systems.

C. Electoral assistance

The Centre for Human Rights has been involved in electoral assistance, through its Technical Cooperation Programme, for more than five years. Since 1990, the Centre has provided electoral assistance to Romania (1990-1992), Albania (1991), Lesotho (1991-1993), Eritrea (1992), Angola (1992), Cambodia (1992), Malawi (1992-1993) and South Africa (1993). In addition, the Centre has prepared guidelines for analysis of electoral laws and procedures, published a handbook on human rights and elections, developed draft guidelines for human rights assessments of requests for electoral assistance, and carried out a number of public information activities relating to human rights and elections.

D. Legislative reform assistance

As a further component of the Technical Cooperation Programme, the Centre for Human Rights makes available international experts and specialized staff to assist Governments in the reform of legislation which has a clear impact on human rights and fundamental freedoms. The goal of such assistance is to bring such laws into conformity with international standards, as identified in United Nations and regional human rights instruments. The Centre provides comments on drafts provided by the requesting Government, as well as drafting recommendations, which may include comparative reference to similar laws in other jurisdictions.

Appropriate subjects under this programme component include penal codes, codes of criminal procedure, prison regulations, laws regarding minority protection, laws affecting freedom of expression, association and assembly, immigration and nationality laws, laws on the judiciary and legal practice, security legislation, and, in general, any law which might have an impact, directly or indirectly, on the realization of internationally protected human rights.

E. Assistance in the establishment and strengthening of national institutions

As its role has been defined by the Commission on Human Rights, a central objective of the Technical Cooperation Programme is to consolidate and strengthen the role which national institutions can play in the promotion and protection of human rights. Assistance to national institutions under the programme takes several forms. The Centre for Human Rights offers its services to Governments which are considering or in the process of establishing a national human rights institution.

Other activities relating to national institutions under the programme are not oriented towards a particular country or institution but are, instead, aimed at promoting the concept of national human rights institutions and encouraging their development. To this end, the Centre has produced information materials and a practical manual for those involved in the establishment and administration of national institutions. The Centre has also conducted a number of seminars and workshops to provide government officials with both information and expertise in the structure and functioning of such bodies. These events have also served as useful forums in which to promote the exchange of information and experience concerning the establishment and operation of national institutions.

The Centre for Human Rights has developed a comprehensive programme of action for technical assistance to national institutions which now guides the elaboration and implementation of all assistance projects to national institutions. In developing this programme, the Centre was guided by the Principles relating to the status of national institutions endorsed by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1992/54 of 3 March 1992 and subsequently by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993. The programme of action sets out four specific objectives: to promote the concept of national human rights institutions; to assist in the creation of effective institutions; to assist in the strengthening of existing institutions; and to foster cooperation between institutions.

Assistance provided by the Centre for strengthening national institutions may include training of staff; advice on the domestic implementation of international human rights instruments; training and assistance in the drafting of reports to United Nations treaty bodies; training and information on the effective investigation of human rights viola-

tions; training in conflict resolution; assistance in the establishment of cooperative relationships with appropriate partners; information on obtaining and managing resources; assistance in conducting reviews and evaluations; and the provision of human rights fellowships for members and staff of national institutions.

F. Administration of justice: judges, magistrates, lawyers, prosecutors, police and prison officials

The Centre for Human Rights, through its Technical Cooperation Programme, has been involved for many years in the training of judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police officers and prison personnel in the area of human rights in the administration of justice.

The purposes of these courses are to familiarize participants with international standards for human rights in the administration of justice; to facilitate examination of humane and effective techniques for the performance of law enforcement, penal and judicial functions in a democratic society; and to prepare participants to include this information in their own training activities.

This approach to professional training for human rights in the administration of justice has, for three years, been undergoing in-field testing by the Centre in its technical cooperation activities in a number of countries, and has been subjected to a series of revisions on the basis of that experience.

1. *Law enforcement officials*

The Centre's courses for law enforcement officials cover a variety of topics, including the following: international sources, systems and standards for human rights in the administration of criminal justice; the duties and guiding principles of ethical police conduct in democracies; the use of force and firearms in law enforcement; the crime of torture; effective methods of legal and ethical interviewing; human rights during arrest and pre-trial detention; and the legal status and rights of the accused.

2. *Prison officials*

Course topics in this category include: minimum standards for facilities for prisoners and detainees; prison health issues, including AIDS and the HIV virus; and special categories of prisoners and detainees, including juveniles and women.

3. *Judges, magistrates, lawyers and prosecutors*

Topics offered in courses for this group include: international sources, systems and standards for human rights in the administration of justice; human rights during criminal investigations, arrest and pre-trial detention; the independence of judges and lawyers; the elements of a fair trial; juvenile justice; protection of the rights of women in the administration of justice; and human rights under states of emergency.

G. Human rights training for the armed forces

It is essential for the good functioning of the rule of law that the armed forces be bound by the Constitution and other laws of the land, that they answer to the democratic Government and that they are trained in and committed to the principles of human rights and humanitarian law attending their legitimate functions in society. The Centre for Human Rights has carried out a number of training activities for military officers.

Certainly, traditional military training has included, in many cases, some attention to the laws of war, including the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. Human rights training *per se*, however, has been conspicuously absent. Indeed, not uncommon in some military circles is the notion that human rights training and sensitization are inconsistent with effective military training. Soldiers, for this way of thinking, are warriors, and the waging of war is, by its very nature, contrary to human rights. The Centre's approach to military training takes issue with this notion for two reasons. First, international human rights standards, including but not always limited to humanitarian law, do apply in situations of armed conflict. Secondly, the duties of modern professional soldiers are not limited to the waging of war. Rather, increasingly, they include civil policing duties, the maintenance of order and public safety under states of emergency, and assign-

ment to international peace-keeping operations. The effective, professional and humane performance of these duties requires a knowledge of and sensitization to human rights standards, as well as the skills to apply them in the daily work of the military.

H. Human rights support to parliaments

National parliaments have, under the Technical Cooperation Programme, received direct training and other support designed to assist them in carrying out their important human rights functions. This programme component addresses a variety of crucial issues, including information on national human rights legislation, parliamentary human rights committees, ratifications of and accessions to international human rights instruments, and, in general, the role of parliament in promoting and protecting human rights.

I. Curriculum development and education for human rights

The Centre for Human Rights is in the process of developing curricula for education on human rights for the primary, secondary and university levels, and for non-formal levels of education. These activities are intended to assist in the building of a human rights culture by encouraging the inclusion of human rights concepts in existing programmes; assisting in the adaptation or modification of curricula where necessary; and providing instruction and assistance to those persons centrally involved in the human rights education process.

There are several means by which these objectives are pursued. The first is teacher training, whereby the Centre offers programmes of training for both primary and secondary school teachers. Courses can also be constructed to accommodate other groups in a position to promote human rights education and sensitize others in this field, such as teacher trainers, directors of schools or teacher-resource centres, and inspectors and teachers within the ministry concerned with curriculum development and education.

J. Treaty reporting and international obligations—training of government officials

The Centre for Human Rights regularly organizes training activities to enable government officials to prepare properly reports required under the various international human rights treaties to which their State is a party. In some cases, courses in reporting obligations are offered at the national or regional level. In others, the Centre provides fellowships for government officials to travel to Geneva, where training courses for several countries are held. During these courses, participants are able to take part in workshops with experts from the various treaty-monitoring committees, as well as with relevant staff of the Centre. In some cases, they are given the opportunity to sit as observers during meetings of the treaty bodies themselves. In every case, participants are provided with a copy of the Centre's *Manual on Human Rights Reporting*.

In accordance with the Centre's standard approach to training, course participants are engaged in practical exercises, which allow them to test the drafting skills imparted during the course. Separate course segments are offered for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

K. Support to NGOs and civil society

National and international non-governmental human rights organizations (NGOs) are key actors in the Technical Cooperation Programme. NGOs both assist in the delivery of assistance, and benefit as recipients of it. Thus, in furthering the programme's goal of strengthening civil society, the Centre for Human Rights is increasingly being called upon by Governments and others to provide assistance to national NGOs, in the context of its country activities, by soliciting their input, including them as invitees in seminars and training courses, and supporting appropriate projects developed by them.

L. Information and documentation projects

The Technical Cooperation Programme also provides assistance in the form of provision of human rights information and documentation, and the building of capacity to utilize and manage such materials properly. This includes direct provision of documentation, translated where necessary into local languages; training in human rights informatics; and assistance in computerization of national and regional human rights offices.

Assistance can also be provided to national libraries in acquiring human rights books and documentation, and support can be given for the establishment and functioning of national or regional human rights documentation centres.

M. Regional institutions and activities

The Technical Cooperation Programme also focuses on the development of human rights infrastructures at the regional level. This is done primarily through the organization of regional workshops and seminars, and through support to regional human rights institutions.

The Centre for Human Rights also provides support, through the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, for regional human rights institutions involved in educational activities, including direct support to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Arab Institute of Human Rights and the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies.

N. Peace-keeping and training of international civil servants

The Technical Cooperation Programme has recently expanded its activities, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993, to include human rights support within the United Nations system. In the area of peace-keeping, for example, the programme has already provided various forms of assistance to major United Nations missions in Cambodia, Eritrea, Mozambique, Haiti, South Africa, the

countries of the former Yugoslavia, and Angola. Such assistance has included, variously, the provision of human rights information, legislative analysis, training, and advisory services.

Efforts are currently under way to conclude a series of agreements with a number of United Nations specialized agencies, the outcome of which is expected to be an increased level of cooperation between the programme and other United Nations organs engaged in human rights-related activities, for example through the provision of human rights training to staff of those agencies.

O. Needs assessments for human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Under the programme approach of the Centre for Human Rights to the provision of technical assistance, discussed above, the Centre responds to most government requests by conducting a careful assessment of the country's particular human rights assistance needs. Assistance programmes are then designed to address those needs in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

Needs-assessment missions conducted by the Centre are typically composed of carefully selected international experts, accompanied by staff of the Technical Cooperation Branch. During such missions, a wide range of parties are consulted in the country, including both governmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals.

The Centre also carries out periodic and post-implementation evaluations of country programmes, in order that their effect may be gauged and follow-up plans developed. These activities are seen by the Centre as crucial to ongoing efforts to strengthen and improve the Technical Cooperation Programme.

P. Human rights fellowships

General Assembly resolution 926 (X) of 14 December 1955, which officially established the advisory services programme, made direct provision for human rights fellowships. Under the programme, fellowships are awarded only to candidates nominated by their Governments, and are financed under the regular budget for advisory services.

The Secretary-General annually sends out invitations to Member States to submit nominations for fellowships. Governments are reminded that nominees should be directly involved in functions affecting human rights, particularly in the administration of justice. The Secretary-General also draws their attention to concerns expressed by the General Assembly, in many of its resolutions, with regard to the rights of women, and encourages the nomination of women candidates. The principle of equitable geographical distribution is taken into account and priority is given to candidates from States which have never benefited from the fellowship programme, or which have not done so in recent years.

Participants receive intensive training in a variety of human rights issues. They are encouraged to exchange experience among themselves, and are requested to evaluate the fellowship programme, to present individual oral reports, and to prepare recommendations for their superiors on the basis of information acquired during the programme. Finally, in accordance with the policy and procedure governing the administration of United Nations fellowships, each participant is required to submit a comprehensive final report to the Centre for Human Rights on subjects directly related to their field of activity.

System-wide cooperation

The Technical Cooperation Programme enjoys close cooperation with non-governmental organizations, regional institutions, universities, and a number of United Nations specialized agencies and human rights treaty and Charter-based bodies, as well as with the International Committee of the Red Cross. This cooperation has been further enhanced by the new approach of the Centre for Human Rights to needs assessment and project formulation, which involves the full partnership of all organizations and States engaged in human rights assistance. In pursuing an integrated and coordinated approach to human rights, the programme has sought to solidify a cooperative framework which includes the sharing of expertise and resources from all available sources.

Under the United Nations programme approach, the Centre works closely with other United Nations agencies and programmes active in the country concerned, cooperating with the Organization's Resident Coordinator in ensuring that the Centre's contribution is part

of a coordinated United Nations-system intervention and complementary to the projects of other actors in support of the Government's goals, programmes and plans of action. The Centre's technical cooperation activities are therefore placed in the context of a single, unified pursuit of national development objectives through cohesive national programmes which merge United Nations-system inputs with national inputs and those of other actors to achieve government objectives for the promotion and protection of human rights. In every case, the focus is on capacity building, aimed at sustained development progress and the eventual obsolescence of external assistance.

Conclusions

The Technical Cooperation Programme is a vital element within the United Nations system of comprehensive assistance for the strengthening of the rule of law, on the basis of relevant United Nations standards embodied in half a century of human rights standard setting by the Organization.

The Centre for Human Rights, which develops and implements the programme under the overall direction of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, is the only unit within the United Nations system which is specifically and exclusively charged with institutional responsibility for human rights. This includes gathering and analysing information on the human rights situation in all countries and (through the various official human rights bodies) keeping such situations under periodic review; providing substantive services to United Nations bodies in the development of international human rights standards; assessing the human rights needs, including institutional needs, of individual Member States; developing technical cooperation programmes aimed at building and strengthening national human rights and legal infrastructures; and producing human rights information and training materials.

In addition, in connection with its mandated functions, the Centre for Human Rights continually gathers information and materials on the human rights activities of Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, specialized institutions and other United Nations actors.

All these capacities are the bases for the Centre's Technical Cooperation Programme and for its efforts to assist States in strengthening the rule of law in their respective jurisdictions.

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No. 2 *The International Bill of Human Rights* (Rev.1)

No. 3 *Advisory Services and Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights* (Rev.1)

No. 4 *Methods of Combating Torture*

No. 5 *Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*

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